



AmeriVoice



SPEAKING OUT FOR SERVICE IN MICHIGAN

Winter 2012 Edition

LeaderCorps Members Unite to Get Things Done

Ellen Hensel

Camp Fire USA

During the last week of January, 24 Michigan's AmeriCorps members headed north for the annual LeaderCorps retreat. The Michigan's AmeriCorps LeaderCorps provides a statewide network for members to share ideas, experiences, and a spirit of service while taking a leadership position in their AmeriCorps program. Each program has the opportunity to select one member to serve as their LeaderCorps representative. The group collaborates on various projects and acts as an intermediary between individual programs and the Michigan Community Service Commission (MCSC), which is the state agency that administers Michigan's AmeriCorps programs.

Originally named the Member Council, LeaderCorps was created as a way to bring members from different programs together to brainstorm ways to strengthen AmeriCorps in Michigan and collaborate on issues related to AmeriCorps service.

Each LeaderCorps representative is part of one of three Leadership Teams that work on outreach, alumni relations, or diversity and inclusion initiatives.

"The LeaderCorps members are an incredibly talented and dynamic group of individu-

als who are committed to service and passionate about making a difference in Michigan communities," commented LeaderCorps supervisor and MCSC staff member, Megan Sargent. "LeaderCorps members play an integral role in helping Michigan's AmeriCorps members understand they are part of a larger national movement."

Since geography separates them most of the year, LeaderCorps members communicate primarily through conference calls. The winter retreat provided a valuable opportunity for members to come together to focus on their Leadership Team goals and delegate future tasks.

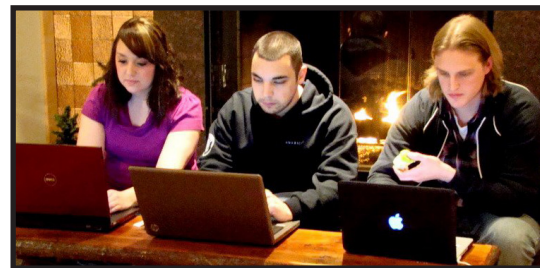
Shari Hampton, who is the LeaderCorps representative for the Detroit LISC program, saw the opportunity as necessary for growth.

"It gave me an opportunity to learn about the exciting things AmeriCorps members are doing in the state and to see positive changes we're making in communities throughout Michigan."

By the end of the retreat, LeaderCorps members had several accomplishments to share, including an updated Michigan's AmeriCorps Alums facebook page, a plan for an inclusion video project contest, a new PowerPoint to be used in outreach presentations, and the content and design for this newsletter. For City Year Detroit representative, Jenn Kern, having everyone to-



Getting Things Done: (Above) LeaderCorps members pose for a group photo during January conference. (Below) LeaderCorps representatives Rachael Wilber, Luke Docherty and Stephen Phillips work together during team time.



gether in the same room made all the difference.

"The retreat was a great way for members to get to know each other and to learn about AmeriCorps programs across Michigan. Bringing together like-minded people and putting them in the same room can be a very inspirational and powerful experience."

Michigan's AmeriCorps members can look forward to hearing more about LeaderCorps activities and accomplishments throughout 2012.



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AmeriCorps Program Lifts Spirits and Ensures Safety

Detroit LISC provides resources for community security upgrade

AmeriCorps member-gives back in local Detroit program.



Robert Harris
Detroit LISC

A few weeks ago, I had a woman come to the office hysterical because someone had attempted a home invasion while she was sleeping the previous night. I had seen this woman a few times around the neighborhood at various community events and block club meetings, but

I had never spoken with her.

Luckily, the Detroit Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC) program with which I serve had just announced our 2011 mini-grant program for residents wanting to make security upgrades to their home. This meant we had funds available to assist her in making the repairs she needed to feel safe. It took a bit longer than we expected because her doors had custom glass we had to have specially cut, but we were able to get her storm

door, main door, and two windows fixed. We also added a set of motion activated lights to her front porch and side door.

To say this woman was grateful fails to capture just how thankful she was for the work we did. A few weeks later, she dropped off a beautiful Christmas card for me but my true Christmas gift was simply seeing her spirits lifted and happy. In our field, it means so much to see individuals, like this woman, truly appreciative of our efforts.

Raise Your Voice

Letter from a member : Thoughts on the future

Alec Marsy

Goodwill Grand Rapids AmeriCorps Partnership

AmeriCorps faces an uncertain future. The problem does not lie inherently with AmeriCorps, but in its presentation. Too often I get blank stares and awkward silences when talking about AmeriCorps, and it's this lack of public awareness that threatens the program we all (I hope) hold so dear.

The end of AmeriCorps does not have to be the future. We have the opportunity to do more, be more and create a program that is known in every household for its character, its ethic, and most importantly, its impact.

We must take every opportunity to let people know who we are and what we do. When people ask you what you do for a living, don't stop with a simple explanation, and don't be afraid to get a little boisterous. My mother always told me, "the squeaky wheel gets the grease,"

Too often I get blank stares and awkward silences when talking about AmeriCorps.

and when it comes to touting a national program that directly improves the lives of countless individuals,

I don't have a lot of shame. So this year, let's do exactly what it is that AmeriCorps has been doing since 1993; GETTING THINGS DONE.



West Michigan Collaboration Hosts MLK Day Event

Celebrating a Legacy: Documentarian Stanley Nelson answers an audience member's question during West Michigan AmeriCorps Collaborative's (WMAC) event, "Freedom Riders" hosted at Celebration Cinema in Grand Rapids. The event, which took place on Tuesday, Jan. 17, started with a volunteer fair and ended with a showing of the PBS film directed by Nelson. More than 300 attended the event.



To the left: West Michigan AmeriCorps Collaborative's volunteer fair on the first level of Celebration Cinema North. More than 33 organizations participated in the fair.

For more info about WMAC, like their page on Facebook!

Reigniting Your Service Spark

Tips to make SMART goals

Dan Drust

Schools of Hope

Many of you are about half-way through your year of service. You're making a difference, but you're also feeling the weight of your commitment. The energetic spark you felt at the beginning of your service now feels more like a delicate flame that you must protect and nurture every step along the way.

How can you continue to Be the Change despite this temporary slump? Consider using these tips from mindtools.com to revisit goals you created at the beginning of your service or to create new goals to guide the remainder of your service.

Choose goals that excite and challenge you. The most important part of any goal is that you're motivated to complete it. Setting goals you're excited about and can be proud of will help you maintain motivation while you trudge through the dirty work. Even if you're setting a goal for your service term that you're not looking forward to, try to incorporate some challenges that will keep you interested.

Use a SMART model. This acronym stands for Specific, Measureable, Attainable, Relevant, and Time-Bound. Set goals that meet each of these requirements and you'll have a clear idea of where you're headed. Here's a breakdown:

- S:** Describe your goal in detail to emphasize exactly what you will do.
- M:** Include a measurement tool to evaluate progress and completion.
- A:** Ensure the goal is realistic in the desired time period.
- R:** Be certain the goal is appropriate and will return the results you want.
- T:** Place time restrictions on your goal.

Write a plan. Looking at a new goal you've created can be daunting. Before starting, take time to lay out detailed steps that will help you to accomplish your goal. Make sure these steps are attainable, and realistic.



So don't hesitate – today is the perfect day to fan your “service flame” by getting your goals down on paper. Before long, you'll be able to reflect on completed goals and a successful service term!



Building Partners: Michelle Kachman (left) interacts with students from Western Michigan University

Day-to-Day Service Provides Most Reward

Michelle Kachman

Together We Prepare

One of our requirements as AmeriCorps members serving with the Red Cross is to submit “great stories” about our service. I always imagined these stories would be about extremely emotional moments – like me comforting a grieving mother after a house fire, or saving a choking infant with my newfound CPR knowledge. Instead, I find myself inspired to write about the seemingly mundane stories I encounter on a daily basis, which have now become “great” in their own way.

In November, I began trying to connect with the Western Michigan University (WMU) Red Cross Club (RCC). The club is a student run organization that has existed for years, but has had limited contact with the chapter itself, especially in recent months. New structural changes within the Red Cross have required a more “big picture” approach which unfortunately means small projects, such as this club, to receive less attention. One of my main responsibilities as an AmeriCorps member thus far has been to recognize initiatives or groups, like the WMU RCC, that may have become disconnected and to revive and reestablish their involvement with the chapter. In order for the WMU RCC to maximize their full potential, they needed a contact person at the chapter who can serve as a liaison between the chapter's needs and the capacity to which the RCC can help. For now, I have gladly stepped into this role and

am uniquely qualified for this position having recently graduated from WMU in April.

At a recent meeting with the WMU RCC, I was pleasantly surprised with the club members. Although there were only five members at this meeting, their ideas, motivation, and dedication regarding the Red Cross were truly inspiring. I was especially impressed because I know how difficult it can be to get involved in the community as a college student. It is easy to become trapped in a student bubble, and remembering a world outside of campus, class, and homework can be a struggle. I remember feeling cut off from my community, and often wondered how I could

mix my passion for social justice and humanitarian aid with my studies. The RCC at WMU is trying to do just that.

So far, the WMU RCC has mainly been involved in blood drives, but they are eager to spread their wings into other areas of service the Red Cross provides. They were particularly

interested in working with the Measles Initiative and will be helping to plan a benefit concert to raise money to vaccinate against measles across the world. These students have the drive, creativity and skills to pull off a major event and fundraiser. It is now up to me to equip them with the tools and resources necessary to succeed. Although this intimidates me in some ways, it also has inspired me to not let them down. I want these students to have a fulfilled college experience where they work hard for something they care about and revel in its success. I look forward to writing one of my future “great stories” after the event takes place!

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Iraq Vet Continues Service Stateside, Recognized for Commitment

Former AmeriCorps member gives back to community after tour of duty

AmeriCorps Alumnus

Spotlight Piece

Cameron Waites has dedicated himself to serving others, and that dedication has positively affected thousands of Michigan residents. An avid volunteer since childhood, Cameron found a higher purpose during his military deployment in Iraq and knew he wanted to help resolve conflicts through volunteerism once he left his service with the Army. Upon his return, Cameron served one year as an AmeriCorps member with the Michigan Service Scholars AmeriCorps program in 2008-2009.

"Service has become a part of my identity and continues to call me to a higher purpose," Cameron stated. "After serving as a Michigan Service Scholar, I have continually received the opportunities and support necessary to develop service projects of my own, with tangible outcomes, which have positively impacted my transition from military to 'civilian life.'"

When asked what his AmeriCorps service meant to him, Cameron responded, "Though I involved myself in several important community issues and service opportunities, those efforts associated with the honoring of our nation's veterans from World War II (WWII), the Korean War, and the Vietnam War added layers of humility to my character as a person, helped educate me as a student outside of the classroom, and gave me a profound sense of direction to guide my own transition from the war zone to the college classroom. Additionally, such

service opportunities bolstered my commitment, desire, and ability to pursue a career in medicine and science. More than volunteer activities, my service in AmeriCorps has helped me along the path in becoming a scholar and citizen in ways no GI Bill or college classroom could offer on their own, independently."

Cameron continues to promote the AmeriCorps spirit of service in a variety of ways. He has volunteered more than 2,000 hours in the past three years through various efforts; including the Critical Issues Forum at the University of Michigan - Flint, the Diversity Council in Flint, as a Freedom Team Salute Ambassador, a mentor with Big Brothers Big Sisters, and as a tutor through In2Books.

Cameron has worked tirelessly on issues most important to him, such as improving race relations, stimulating the local economy, honoring military veterans, and creating supj-



Being Recognized: From left, Jim Vella (Ford Motor Company), Governor Rick Snyder, Volunteer of the Year Winner Cameron Waites, and State Farm Insurance representative.

portive programs for student veterans. "I have sought out ways to carry my experiences forward and am always looking to provide similar opportunities to others. Recently, I created a volunteer partnership program between a university and community hospital so that student veterans interested in health careers can gain relevant medical experience while connecting with an older generation of veterans."

His efforts have not gone unnoticed. On October 24, 2011, Cameron was awarded the Michigan Governor's Service Award for Volunteer of the Year. This award honors an individual who strives to improve the lives of neighbors, friends, community, or congregation.



Recipe on a Budget: Quinoa Salad

This simple recipe is great for lunches, and even on the go. Look for "Recipe on a Budget" in all AmeriVoice newsletters. Serves four.

Ingredients

- 1 cup quinoa (rinsed well if not prewashed)
- 2 cups water (or chicken broth for more flavor)
- 1/4 cup slivered almonds
- 2 cloves of garlic, thinly sliced
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 1/3 cup chopped fresh parsley
- 1/4 cup raisins

Directions

- Quinoa cooks like rice. For this recipe, add two cups water or chicken broth.
- Bring the quinoa to a boil. Reduce heat, cover it and let it simmer until all of the liquid is absorbed (10-15 minutes).
- Toast almonds over medium heat until golden and transfer to a plate. Sautee garlic in olive oil until it has a golden color and reserve the oil.
- Finally fluff quinoa. Add almonds, garlic, reserved oil, parsley, raisins and season with salt and pepper.

Random Acts of Kindness Bring Volunteers Together

Juvenile Justice Program recruits locals to lend a hand in holiday program

Luke W. Docherty

Downriver CARES

There are so many amazing memories and outcomes that come with serving in AmeriCorps, but a few really stick with you. I have this kind of memory from my service with The Guidance Center's Juvenile Justice Program. I currently serve with ten youth between the ages of 14 and 17 who are on juvenile probation. The youth participate in a school setting where they have education, group, and culinary learning sessions each day.

This past December, the Juvenile Justice program started a recycling program that the youth in the day treatment program help maintain. Every other Thursday group session, the youth, program staff, and DownriverCARES AmeriCorps members go out to collect recycling

from all The Guidance Center buildings on the Southgate campus. After months of collecting and returning bottles, the youth had collectively made \$100.00 for the program.

In light of the holiday season, the youth used the money earned

from the recycling program to buy ten Meijer gift cards worth ten dollars each. They thought donating the money would be more beneficial

than spending it on themselves. Before the holiday break, the youth and staff went to a nearby Meijer to pick ten people they thought were most deserving of the gift card. The youth were nervous, at first, because many of them are not accustomed to this kind of activity. After the

Giving the gifts away was great, but two women were so happy for this random act of kindness they started to get emotional.



Giving Back: Luke Docherty, Downriver CARES AmeriCorps member poses for a picture.

first gift card was given, though, the rest of the youth were excited to give out their gift cards as well.

Seeing the faces of the people, as well as the youth, was priceless and this was an experience I will never forget.

Two women were so happy for this random act of kindness they started to get emotional, giving the youth hugs for being so nice. I could not have asked for a better way to serve this past holiday season than with these amazing youth.

I would like to leave you all with a quote by Ralph Waldo Emerson that I feel speaks to all serving,

"To laugh often and much; to win the respect of intelligent people and the affection of children; to earn the appreciation of honest critics and to endure the betrayal of false friends; to appreciate beauty; to find the best in others; to leave the world a bit better whether by a healthy child, a garden patch or a redeemed social condition; to know even one life has breathed easier because you have lived. This is to have succeeded."

GLOBAL YOUTH SERVICE DAY
April 20-22 2012

Engaging Michigan's Youth in Service

The Michigan Community Service Commission (MCSC) and The League Michigan are excited to mobilize youth volunteers across the state this April as part of the 2012 Global Youth Service Day (GYSD). This annual event, held on April 20, 21, and 22, encourages young people to address the world's most critical issues through service.



In 2011, more than **1,615 youth** and **522 adults** volunteered more than **6,917 hours** via **106 service projects** in Michigan for GYSD. Those volunteers impacted more than 63,000 individuals.

There are many ways you can help illuminate the efforts of Michigan's outstanding youth volunteers. You can plan a GYSD event in your neighborhood and encourage members of your community to participate. Make sure to post your project online at www.gysd.org to recruit volunteers.

AmeriCorps Program Strives to Shape Attitudes... and Clay Too

Alternative Suspension Program provides opportunities for students when few exist

Mark Haskin

Faith in Youth Partnership

When students arrive at the Alternative Suspension Program (ASP), it is always a bittersweet feeling for the teachers at the program. Students who attend ASP are suspended or expelled from school and arrive for a variety of reasons, primarily poor decision making. It is the goal of ASP not only to help suspended students stay on track with their academic schedule, but also to shape attitudes, mentalities, and decision making skills. At ASP, students are given opportunities to explore different career paths, volunteer for community agencies, and most recently, receive hands on training and instruction in different art media through the nonprofit arts organization CultureWorks.

After they attended CultureWorks for the first time, our students knew these art classes were about more than just art. Through encouragement, exploration, education, and experiencing failure and success while attending CultureWorks, the students at ASP learned an important lesson: each step in the process is important and significant to the outcome of your

project. Our instructor, an AmeriCorps alumnus, knew these same principles are important to understand and practice outside of the studio as well, which made this partnership between CultureWorks and ASP even more beneficial for the students. There were several times where the instructor would calmly examine a student's project and carefully explain the project must be restarted because the process was not done precisely as instructed.

Frustrated, the students would try to pass off their project as 'good enough,' but the instructor explained that 'good enough' wasn't good enough for her. She was looking for each student's best effort. After about a month of starting a project, re-starting a project, and sometimes starting it over for a third time, the students began to understand the importance of the entire process in their art projects. If the clay wasn't prepared thoroughly, it would explode in

the kiln; if the coils are not consistently sized, the coil pot would fall apart and cave in; if the clay became too wet or dry, cracks would form, and breaking would occur upon firing.

Students at ASP spent three hours a week at CultureWorks for approximately ten weeks. At the end of the course, our students' art projects

were put on display in a gallery for a community showing. Each student had approximately three projects on display for family members, teachers, friends, and community members to enjoy. As proud as we were of the students' projects, we were even more proud of their understanding that the process matters, the end result is not the only important thing

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to consider, and without taking the right steps the result will not be possible. Through their involvement with CultureWorks and ASP, these students have learned that simply getting things done isn't the end goal; the end goal is to get things done in an honest, honorable, and dedicated way.

2011-2012 LeaderCorps Representatives



Leon Artis – Next Step Reintegration AmeriCorps
 John Bolan – Power of We Consortium
 Natalie Ciampichini – Michigan Foreclosure Prevention Corps
 Luke Docherty – Downriver CARES
 Dan Drust – Schools of Hope
 Kathleen Egan – Michigan Community Service Commission Inclusion*VISTA
 Shari Hampton – Detroit LISC*
 Liz Hand – Marquette-Alger Regional Educational Service Agency
 James Hartrick – Cooking Matters*
 Mark Haskin – Faith In Youth Partnership
 Ellen Hensel – Camp Fire USA
 Stephanie Howells – AmeriCorps Urban Safety Program
 Jenn Kern – City Year Detroit
 Michael Matthis – Mentor Michigan College Coaching Corps
 Alec Marsy – Goodwill Grand Rapids AmeriCorps Partnership
 Khoa Nguyen – Together We Prepare
 Steve Phillips – Cherry Street Community Health Corps

Corey Saylor – Michigan Campaign to End Homelessness
 Chris Simmons – Michigan Primary Care Association
 Harriet Smith – Huron Pines
 Nonie Peterson – Detroit Youth Energy Squad
 Andrea Villanueva – Michigan's AmeriCorps Alum
 Rachael Wilber – Superior AmeriCorps
 Rachel Wenzlick – Saginaw Substance Abuse Prevention Partnership

*indicates National Direct program

This newsletter is a product of the Michigan's AmeriCorps LeaderCorps with support from the Michigan Community Service Commission. For more information about Michigan's AmeriCorps, visit www.michigan.gov/mcsc.